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ABSTRACT

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Research Series No. 84

THE INFLUENCE OF PROBLEM OWNERSHIP
ON TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF
AND STRATEGIES FOR COPING
WITH PROBLEM STUDENTS

Jerome E. Brophy and Mary M. Rohrkemper

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Abstract

Elementary teachers read vignettes depicting incidents involving (fictional) students who presented chronic behavior problems, and then told how they would respond if the incidents occurred in their classrooms. Responses were coded for attributions about the students and about the teachers' roles in causing and remediating the problems. Teachers attributed controllability and intentionality to students presenting teacher-owned problems, but not to students presenting student-owned problems. Students presenting shared problems often were seen as able to control their behavior, but not as misbehaving intentionally. The contrasting patterns of attribution seen in these three levels of problem ownership were also associated with contrasting patterns of goals and strategies. The data bear out expectations based on attributional analyses of helping behavior, but raise questions about teachers' preparedness to cope with problem students.

THE INFLUENCE OF PROBLEM OWNERSHIP
ON TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF
AND STRATEGIES FOR COPING
WITH PROBLEM STUDENTS¹

Jere E. Brophy and Mary M. Rohrkemper²

Brophy and Putnam (1979), in a review of elementary school classroom management, contrasted the literature on managing groups of students during actual instruction with the literature on coping with students who present serious and sustained problems. They concluded that recent research had produced a rich and largely consistent knowledge base identifying effective group management techniques and linking them to teacher success in maximizing student engagement in academic activities and achievement on standardized tests (cf. Anderson, Evertson, & Brophy, 1979; Brophy & Evertson, 1976; Emmer, Evertson, & Anderson, 1980; Good & Grouws, 1977; and Kounin, 1970). They also reported agreement across diverse sources (educational psychology, behavior modification, and psychotherapy/mental health texts) on principles for dealing with students who present serious problems. Various authors employed different concepts and addressed different problems, but when they did overlap in discussing dealing with problem students, they usually offered similar advice. This advice typically was not based on classroom research, however. With the exception of certain applications of behavior modification principles, there has been little research on methods of dealing with problem students and, in particular, very little research

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focusing on techniques that may be feasible and effective for the ordinary classroom teacher (i.e., not the school psychologist or other specialist).

These issues are addressed in the Classroom Strategy Study, an investigation of teachers' thinking about and strategies for coping with 12 types of "difficult" or "problem" students often observed at the elementary level (see Appendix 1). The 12 problem behavior types described in the appendix were identified as the focus for study through the following process: First, a list of approximately 75 troublesome behaviors was developed from nominations by the Classroom Strategy Study staff, which included professors and graduate students in educational psychology and related disciplines, along with several elementary school teachers. The list was first winnowed through elimination of duplication, and then sharpened and elaborated using concepts and terminology borrowed from previous studies of chronic childhood problem behavior syndromes as seen by clinicians or classroom teachers (Lambert & Nicoll, 1977; Miller, 1972; Peterson, 1961; Stott, Marston, & Neill, 1975; Werry & Quay, 1971).

The result was a list of about 20 syndromes or patterns of problem behavior, later reduced to the 12 shown in Figure 1 by eliminating several that seemed less severe or widespread than the others. The 12 patterns are defined so as to be mutually exclusive, although several could coexist in the same student (for example, short attention span/distractibility and motoric hyperactivity involve different behaviors but are often seen in the same individuals, and either or both of these could be combined with underachievement, hostile aggressive behavior, or other patterns, as well). Even where multiple patterns exist in the same individual, however, the patterns are different enough to be described separately without difficulty, and it seemed likely that teachers would use different strategies to try to cope with them. Consequently, Classroom Strategy Study procedures were designed to deal with each problem separately. It should

1. Failure Syndrome. These children are convinced that they cannot do the work. They often avoid starting or give up easily. They expect to fail, even after succeeding. Signs: easily frustrated; gives up easily, says "I can't do it."
2. Perfectionist. These children are unduly anxious about making mistakes. Their self-imposed standards are unrealistically high, so that they are never satisfied with their work (when they should be). Signs: too much of a "perfectionist"; often anxious/fearful/frustrated about quality of work; holds back from class participation unless sure of self.
3. Underachiever. These children do a minimum to just "get by." They do not value schoolwork. Signs: indifferent to school work; minimum work output; not challenged by schoolwork; poorly motivated.
4. Low Achiever. These children have difficulty, even though they may be willing to work. Their problem is low potential or lack of readiness rather than poor motivation. Signs: difficulty following directions; difficulty completing work; poor retention; progresses slowly.
5. Hostile Aggressive. These children express hostility through direct, intense behaviors. They are not easily controlled. Signs: intimidates and threatens; hits and pushes; damages property; antagonizes; hostile; easily angered.
6. Passive Aggressive. These children express opposition and resistance to the teacher, but indirectly. It often is hard to tell whether they are resisting deliberately or not. Signs: subtly oppositional and stubborn; tries to control; borderline compliance with rules; mars property rather than damages; disrupts surreptitiously; drags feet.
7. Defiant. These children resist authority and carry on a power struggle with the teacher. They want to have their way and not be told what to do. Signs: (1) resists verbally (e.g., (a) "You can't make me..."; (b) "You can't tell me what to do..."; (c) makes derogatory statements about teacher to others); (2) resists non-verbally (e.g., (a) frowns, grimaces, mimics teacher; (b) arms folded, hands on hips, foot stomping; (c) looks away when being spoken to; (d) laughs at inappropriate times; (e) may be physically violent toward teacher; (f) deliberately does what teacher says not to do).
8. Hyperactive. These children show excessive and almost constant movement, even when sitting. Often their movements appear to be without purpose. Signs: squirms, wiggles, jiggles, scratches; easily excitable; blurts out answers and comments; often out of seat; bothers other children with noises, movements; energetic but poorly directed; excessively touches objects or people.
9. Short Attention Span/Distractible. These children have short attention spans. They seem unable to sustain attention and concentration. Easily distracted by sounds, sights, or speech. Signs: has difficulty adjusting to changes; rarely completes tasks; easily distracted.
10. Immature. These children are immature. They have poorly developed emotional stability, self control, self-care abilities, social skills, and/or responsibility. Signs: often exhibits behavior normal for younger children; may cry easily; loses belongings; frequently appears helpless, incompetent, and/or dependent.
11. Rejected by Peers. These children seek peer interaction but are rejected, ignored, or excluded. Signs: forced to work and play alone; lacks social skills; often picked on or teased.
12. Shy/Withdrawn. These children avoid personal interactions, are quiet and unobtrusive, and do not respond well to others. Signs: quiet and sober; does not initiate or volunteer; does not call attention to self.

Figure 1. The 12 types of problem behavior addressed by the Classroom Strategy Study.

be noted, however, that teachers deal with real students, not abstract behavioral syndromes. They may worry more about peer rejection of compliant students, for example, than about peer rejection of students whose behavior is marked by defiance and hostile aggression. These and other possible interaction effects among behavior patterns that coexist in the same individuals were not addressed in the Classroom Strategy Study.

This study is not an experiment but a large and systematic gathering of self report data from experienced elementary teachers selected to provide variation in grade level and types of students taught and in skill at dealing with problem students. Teachers were first observed for two half-days in their classrooms so that interviewers could develop impressions of their style and success at managing the classroom and dealing with problem students. Then they were interviewed, individually and at length (an average of over four hours per teacher). This began with a series of vignettes depicting classroom incidents in which students' actions or failures to act produced outcomes that teachers view as undesirable, and that most teachers will try to counter by instructing or socializing the students involved. The series of vignettes included two for each of the 12 problem student types described in Figure 1 (see Figure 2). Teachers were asked to read each vignette and then tell how they would handle that situation if it arose in their classroom. Upon completing the vignettes, the teachers began another interview in which they proceeded through the 12 problem behavior syndromes and stated what they had learned about coping with each one. This interview produced information about general strategies, including preventive methods and long range goals. The present report deals with teachers' responses to the vignettes.

Interviews were tape recorded and transcribed, and then coded with a variety of instruments that included categories drawn from both empirical content analysis and theoretical sources. This report presents findings related to concepts drawn from two theoretical sources: Gordon's (1974) Teacher

1. Joe could be a capable student, but his self concept is so poor that he actually describes himself as stupid. He makes no serious effort to learn, shrugging off responsibility by saying that "that stuff" is too hard for him. Right now he is dawdling instead of getting started on an assignment that you know he can do. You know that if you approach him he will begin to complain that the assignment is too hard and that he can't do it.
2. This morning, several students excitedly tell you that on the way to school they saw Tom beating up Sam and taking his lunch money. Tom is the class bully and has done things like this many times.
3. Bill is an extremely active child. He seems to burst with energy, and today he is barely "keeping the lid on." This morning, the class is working on their art projects and Bill has been in and out of his seat frequently. Suddenly, Roger lets out a yell and you look up to see that Bill has knocked Roger's sculpture off his desk. Bill says he didn't mean to do it, he was just returning to his seat.
4. Mark is not well accepted by his classmates. Today he has been trying to get some of the other boys to play a particular game with him. After much pleading the boys decide to play the game, but exclude Mark. Mark argues, saying that he should get to play because it was his idea in the first place, but the boys start without him. Finally, Mark gives up and slinks off, rejected again.
5. Beth has average ability for school work, but she is so anxious about the quality of her work, that she seldom finishes an assignment because of all her "start-overs." This morning you have asked the children to make pictures to decorate the room. The time allocated to art has almost run out and Beth is far from finished with her picture. You ask her about it and find out she has "made mistakes" on the other ones and this is her third attempt at a "good picture."
6. The class is about to begin a test. The room is quiet. Just as you are about to begin speaking, Audrey opens her desk. Her notebook slides off the desk, spilling loose papers on the floor. Audrey begins gathering up the papers, slowly and deliberately. All eyes are upon her. Audrey stops, grins, and then slowly resumes gathering papers. Someone laughs. Others start talking.
7. George's attention wanders easily. Today it has been divided between the discussion and various distractions. You ask him a question, but he is distracted and doesn't hear you.
8. Linda is bright enough, but she is shy and withdrawn. She doesn't volunteer to participate in class, and when you call on her directly, she often does not respond. When she does, she usually whispers. Today, you are checking seatwork progress. When you question her, Linda keeps her eyes lowered and says nothing.
9. Carl can do good work, but he seldom does. He will try to get out of work. When you speak to him about this, he makes a show of looking serious and pledging reform, but his behavior doesn't change. Just now, you see a typical scene: Carl is making paper airplanes when he is supposed to be working.
10. Roger has been fooling around instead of working on his seatwork for several days now. Finally, you tell him that he has to finish or stay in during recess and work on it then. He says, "I won't stay in!" and spends the rest of the period sulking. As the class begins to line up for recess, he quickly jumps up and heads for the door. You tell him that he has to stay inside and finish his assignment, but he just says "No, I don't!" and continues out the door to recess.
11. Betty seems younger than the other students in your class. She has difficulty getting along with them and is quick to tattle. She has just told you that she heard some of the boys use "bad words" during recess today.
12. Jeff tries hard but is the lowest achiever in the class. This week you taught an important sequence of lessons. You spent a lot of extra time with Jeff and thought he understood the material. Today you are reviewing. All the other students answer your questions with ease, but when you call on Jeff he is obviously lost.

(Continued on next page)

Figure 2. The 24 vignettes used in the Classroom Strategy Study.

(Figure 2 continued)

13. Mary has the intelligence to succeed, if she applied herself, but she is convinced that she can't handle it. She gets frustrated and disgusted very easily, and then she gives up. Instead of trying to solve the problem another way, or coming to you for help, she skips the problem and moves on. Today she brings you her assignment, claiming to be finished, but you see that she has skipped many items.
14. Class is disrupted by a scuffle. You look up to see that Ron has left his seat and gone to Phil's desk, where he is punching and shouting at Phil. Phil is not so much fighting back as trying to protect himself. You don't know how this started, but you do know that Phil gets along well with the other students but Ron often starts fights and argues without provocation.
15. Paul can't seem to keep his hands off of the things and people in the room. He also seems to want to inspect or play with whatever is at hand. When he is not physically manipulating someone or something else, he hums, whistles, grins, drums his fingers, taps his feet, or makes other noises through physical activity. Just now he has discovered that one of the screws holding the back of his chair to its frame is loose, and he is pushing and pulling at the loose piece. In the process, he is further loosening the connection and at the same time distracting the class with the noise he is making.
16. Kathy is a loner in the classroom and an onlooker on the playground. No one willingly sits with her or plays with her. You divided the class into groups to work on projects, and those in Kathy's group are making unkind remarks about her, loud enough for all to hear.
17. Chris is a capable student who is exceptionally anxious about making mistakes. He doesn't contribute to class discussions or recitation unless he is absolutely sure he is right. You recognize his anxiety and try to call on him only when you are reasonably sure he can handle it. When you do this today, he blanches and stumbles through an incorrect answer. He is clearly upset.
18. The class has just been given instructions to line up quickly. The students comply, with the exception of Jack, who is always the last to follow directions. Jack remains at his desk, working on a drawing. He looks up, in the direction of the line, then resumes work on his drawing.
19. Sarah never seems to finish an assignment. She is easily distracted, and then isn't able to recapture what she had been thinking about before the interruption. You distribute a work sheet to the class, and the students, including Sarah, begin their work. After a couple of minutes you see that Sarah is looking out the window, distracted again.
20. John often seems to be off in his own world, but today he is watching you as you lead a discussion. Pleased to see him attentive, you ask him what he thinks. However, you have to repeat his name and he looks startled when he realizes that you have called on him. Meanwhile, you realize that he has been immersed in daydreams and only appeared to be paying attention.
21. Nancy is oriented toward peers and social relationships, not school work. She could be doing top grade work, but instead she does just enough to get by. She is often chatting or writing notes when she is supposed to be paying attention or working. During today's lesson, she has repeatedly turned to students on each side of her to make remarks, and now she has a conversation going with several friends.
22. Squirting guns are not permitted in school. Scott has been squirting other students with his squirt gun. You tell him to bring the squirt gun to you. He refuses, saying that it is his and you have no right to it. You insist, but he remains defiant and starts to become upset. Judging from his past and present behavior, he is not going to surrender the squirt gun voluntarily.
23. Greg often loses his belongings, becomes upset, whines, and badgers you to help him. Now he has misplaced his hat, and he is pestering you again. Other students smirk and make remarks about this, and Greg becomes upset.
24. Tim is a poor student. He has a low potential for school work and also lacks the basic experiences that help a child function in the classroom. You have just presented a new lesson to the class and have assigned related seatwork. You look over the class and see that Tim is upset. When you ask him if something is wrong, he tells you that he can't do it -- it's too hard.

Effectiveness Training and the contributions of several social psychologists concerning thinking and behavior in helping situations.

Problem Ownership

The concept of problem ownership has been used by various writers concerned with psychotherapy and parenting. Gordon (1970) posited that conflicts between parents and children could be subdivided into categories reflecting the degree to which the parents and children were frustrating one another's needs. Research on parents' responses to vignettes involving conflicts with children has shown that these categories or levels of problem ownership are associated with contrasting parental responses on dimensions such as assuming a sympathetic, solution-oriented stance versus an unsympathetic, authoritarian stance (Stollak, Scholom, Kallman, & Saturansky, 1973; Kallman, Note 1).

Gordon (1974) has suggested that identification of who owns a problem is also important in examining classroom conflicts. Specifically, he suggests that problems in teacher-student interaction can be divided into three types:

(1) teacher-owned problems, in which student behavior interferes with the teacher's meeting his/her own needs, or causes the teacher to feel frustrated, upset, irritated, or angry; (2) shared problems, in which the teacher and a student interfere with each other's need satisfaction; and (3) student-owned problems, in which students' need satisfaction is frustrated by people or events which do not include the teacher.

Teachers are ultimately responsible for what occurs in their classrooms, and therefore have at least some degree of ownership in all problems that occur there. However, student problem behavior, including that depicted in our vignettes, can be located on a continuum ranging from primarily teacher-owned problems through more equally shared problems to primarily student-owned problems, according to the degree to which teacher behavior frustrates the need satisfaction of students, or vice versa. The 24 vignettes in Figure 2 were grouped into three levels of problem ownership.

Primarily teacher-owned problems include vignettes 2, 6, 9, 10, 14, 18, 21, and 22. In each of these vignettes, the student's actions threaten the teacher's needs for authority and control. Primarily student-owned problems include vignettes 4, 5, 12, 16, 17, 23, and 24. Here, the students have general problems of self devaluation, feelings of inadequacy, or internal conflicts. These frustrate progress toward their own goals, but do not directly thwart the need satisfaction of the teacher. Vignettes 1, 3, 7, 8, 11, 13, 15, 19, and 20 present shared problems. In these vignettes, the students do not directly threaten the teacher's authority, but because they have difficulty living up to the demands of the ideal student role, they create classroom management or control problems for the teacher. These three levels of problem ownership comprise a situational independent variable used in analysis of teachers' thinking about and strategies for coping with the problem behavior depicted in the vignettes.

Attributional Analysis of Helping Behavior

The attributional approach to the study of achievement (Weiner, 1979) has become well known to educational psychologists in recent years. Less well known, but perhaps equally exciting, are attributional analyses of people's thinking and behavior in helping situations (i.e., situations in which a victim is suffering some kind of frustration or deprivation, and an onlooker must decide whether or not to offer help). Research has been conducted, for example, on the behavior of ordinary citizens confronted with the physical collapse of a man who may be drunk, ill, or injured, and the behavior of college students asked to lend their notes to a classmate who missed the previous class. Analyses of reactor behavior in these situations indicate that the likelihood of helping the victim depends on the reactor's attributions concerning (1) the locus of causality of the victim's problem and (2) the controllability the

victim has over his or her plight (Piliavin, Rodin, & Piliavin, 1969; Simon and Weiner, in press). Also important are the personal risk factors involved in helping and the degree of ambiguity in the situation (Crano, Note 2).

We expected to find similar effects in teachers' responses to our vignettes. Specifically, we expected that teachers' understanding of problems and their intensity, as well as their attributions about students' self-control capacities and underlying intentions, would differ as a function of problem ownership and be associated with teachers' perceptions of their own roles (if any) in causing the problem, their perceptions of their ability to produce change, and the nature of the strategies they suggested for trying to do so.

Method

Teachers

Interviews were obtained from 98 elementary school teachers distributed about evenly across grades K-6. Of these, 54 taught in Lansing and 44 in inner-city Detroit. No more than four teachers in any given school were included. All teachers had at least three years of experience and had been nominated by their principals as either outstanding or average in ability to deal with difficult students. These 98 teachers represented about 75% of those originally nominated; the others declined to participate. Teachers were paid for the time they spent responding to our interviews.

Data Collection

Each teacher was observed and interviewed by a Classroom Strategy Study staff member, who did not know how the principal had rated the teacher. Teachers were observed for two half-days, during which the interviewers gathered general impressions of the teacher's style and level of success in managing the classroom and dealing with problem students, the nature of the students in the class, the general classroom atmosphere, and the availability and use of other adults in the classroom. Following this, teachers were interviewed individually for an

average of over four hours (range = 2 to 10 hours), spread over two or more sessions.

Interviews began with the vignettes, which were presented one at a time in the order given in Figure 2. Following the vignettes, teachers were asked to discuss their general strategies for dealing with each of the 12 problem student types described in Figure 1. They also were asked to rate their abilities to cope with each of these student types, to state the frequency with which they had encountered each type in the past three years, and to answer several questions about the schools in which they taught. The present report focuses on analyses of teachers' responses to the vignettes. Readers interested in more details about the larger study as a whole should consult Rohrkemper and Brophy (Note 3).

There were two vignettes for each of the 12 problem behavior types described in Figure 1. During development, the vignettes were revised several times to insure that they depicted incidents that would be familiar to elementary school teachers and perceived as typical of the kinds of problems presented by each of the 12 types of problem students under study. To make it easy for each teacher to visualize the events depicted in the vignette as occurring in his or her own classroom, we eliminated specific references to facilities, equipment, or individuals (school psychologists, social workers) that might be familiar to some teachers but not others.

In order to avoid confounding the behavior depicted in the vignettes with various status characteristics of students, we avoided mention of age, race, ethnicity, or social class, and eliminated clues (direct quotes or other language data, pictures or drawings, and so on) that might suggest these characteristics. Students were identified by sex through their names, because

we felt that this was necessary for realism. Only male names were assigned to behavior patterns identified primarily with males (hyperactivity, hostile aggressive behavior), but both male and female names were assigned to behavior patterns that are less sex typed (failure syndrome, passive aggressive). The incident depicted in each vignette is presented as only the latest in a series of similar incidents involving the same student. Thus, the incident is placed in a context of chronic problem behavior as defined by the patterns given in Figure 1.

Teachers were asked to read each vignette and respond as if the situation had occurred in their classroom. Specifically, they were asked to state what they would say and do, to tell why they would say and do this, and to describe the student in the vignette in their own words. These data simulate teachers' responses to actual classroom incidents in which there are real consequences for themselves, for the student engaging in the problem behavior, and for all the students in the class, who witness the event and experience its effects vicariously.

Problem Ownership Classification

Using definitions given by Gordon (1974), we initially classified the 24 vignettes into five categories according to the degree to which the frustration of need satisfaction in the incident affected the teacher rather than the student: 1 = 90-100%; 2 = 60-90%; 3 = 40-60%; 4 = 10-40%; 5 = 0-10%. This produced 75% agreement within one scale point. Discussion of disagreements led to identification of two major sources of ambiguity, and to the establishment of two coding conventions to eliminate them.

The first ambiguity concerned the motivations of the students, which are spelled out clearly in some vignettes but deliberately left ambiguous in others. In coding problem ownership, we adopted the convention that students would not be construed as deliberately creating problems for the teacher or

self defeating outcomes for themselves unless such motivation was stated explicitly in the vignette. Thus, the hyperactive students were not described as deliberately causing disruption or property damage, and the distractible students were not described as deliberately ignoring the teacher or interrupting the flow of activities.

The second coding convention dealt with the point in time at which problem ownership was to be assessed. Given that these were classroom events in which teachers were going to intervene, definitions of problems and determinations of ownership would be different before and after such intervention. Within Gordon's (1974) scheme, aggressive students who attack their peers, or underachievers who entertain themselves when they are supposed to be working, create a problem for the teacher but do not have a problem themselves (their need satisfaction is not being frustrated). This would change if the teacher should intervene, however, especially by pressuring or punishing them. At this point, the situation becomes a shared problem, or even a primarily student-owned problem. At the other extreme, consider students who are rejected by their peers through no fault of their own. In a sense, this is purely a student-owned problem, but it becomes partly a teacher-owned problem as soon as the teacher notices it and feels compelled to try to do something about it. To minimize these ambiguities, and also to insure that the classification of problem ownership in these vignettes was faithful to Gordon's (1974) guidelines, we established the convention that problem ownership would be assessed as it existed prior to the teacher's intervention. Thus, aggression and underachievement were classified as primarily teacher-owned problems, even though they might become student-owned problems as well, once the teacher intervened.

Use of these coding conventions led to 100% agreement within one point on the five-point scale of problem ownership. Furthermore, inspection of the ratings revealed that 23 of the 24 vignettes were coded at either the extremes or the middle of the scale, and thus could be classified as primarily teacher-owned, primarily student-owned, or clearly shared problems. The only exception was vignette #11, which seemed to be somewhere between an equally shared problem and a primarily student-owned problem. To reduce our list to three classifications and thus simplify analysis, we classified vignette #11 as an equally shared problem.

Attribution Coding

Each teacher's response to each vignette was coded with the Attribution Inference coding system, which focused on five attribution dimensions; locus of causality, stability, and controllability (Weiner, 1979); intentionality (Rosenbaum, Note 4); and globality (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978). Coders assessed teachers' attributions about the student who presented the problem and about their own role (if any) in creating or remediating the problem.

In assessing locus of causality, coders rated whether the problem resulted from factors internal to the student (Bill is hyperactive), from factors external to the student (Bill has never been taught to control himself), or from an interaction between internal and external factors (Bill is hyped up and hasn't learned to monitor his behavior). Teachers who mentioned only one of these possibilities were coded accordingly, and the others were coded as having mentioned multiple possibilities. Similar methods were used in coding the other four attribution dimensions. Controllability ratings concerned whether the student was responsible for the problem (Bill can stay in his seat if he tries), or whether the problem was something beyond the student's control (he just can't stop his body from moving all the time).

Intentionality coding concerned whether the student was acting intentionally (he was probably mad at Roger) or unintentionally (he was probably trying to help Roger). Stability codes concerned whether the problem was seen as stable over time (he is constantly in motion, never stops) or as variable (some days, he can't keep the lid on; other days, he does quite nicely). Finally, globality coding concerned whether the problem was seen as generalized across situations (he can't sit still anywhere) or as specific to certain contexts (he has a hard time with the demands for quiet and physical inactivity in the classroom, but he's fine elsewhere).

Four of these five dimensions of teachers' inferences about students were also used in rating teachers' inferences about themselves. Here, the locus of causality coding concerned whether teachers saw the problem as resulting from factors internal to themselves (Bill is bored; that means I didn't plan the lesson well), factors external to themselves (Bill is hyperactive and thoughtless), or a combination of internal and external causes (I know that Bill is hyperactive, but I could have prevented this by providing him with more structure). Controllability coding in this case referred to teachers' perceptions that they could control the expression of the problem (i.e., could produce desirable change) through their own efforts. Teachers were coded as believing that they could produce change personally (I would put Bill on a contract system. It might take a while, but he'd learn), believing that change was possible but not through their own efforts (Bill needs to be put on Ritalin), or believing that meaningful change was not possible, whether through the efforts of themselves or anyone else (You can't do much with Bill except wait for him to outgrow his hyperactivity). Stability coding concerned whether teachers expected any improvements in problem behavior to be stable (When Bill learns to be aware of his hyperactivity, he will be able to control it) or unstable (Bill will feel bad about the broken sculpture and he will be careful--for awhile anyway). Finally, globality

coding concerned whether the teacher expected to produce generalized change (I would make sure to notice when he was able to control himself better on the playground, at lunch, or what have you) versus situation specific change (I would remove him from the hubbub to help him control himself next time we had art so this wouldn't happen). Intentionality was not coded in regard to teachers' perceptions of their change efforts, because these were always explicitly intentional.

Other Coding

Vignette responses were also coded with other systems. The Rewards and Punishments coding system examined the types of reward, punishment, supportive behavior, and threatening or pressuring behavior that teachers reported using in dealing with the problems depicted in the vignettes. The Universal coding system addressed various qualitative aspects of teachers' responses, including whether the content communicated to students was instructive versus merely imperative, and whether the goals of the intervention strategy were confined to short term control/desist attempts or instead included systematic attempts to modify behavior through instruction or reinforcement or get to the bottom of the problem by building a relationship and producing insight. Details about coding and analyses involving these other systems can be found in Rohrkemper and Brophy (Note 5, Note 6). The present report mentions only a selected subset of these variables, to illustrate general patterns of relationship to problem ownership.

Coding Reliability

All teachers' responses to each vignette were coded twice, by separate coders, with each of the three systems. Coders were unaware of the identities of the teachers, the problem ownership classifications of the vignettes, and our expectations concerning relationships with attributions. Coding reliability was

computed as percent exact agreement. Percent exact agreement equals the number of codes made and agreed upon by both coders divided by itself, plus the number of disagreements, plus the number of codes made by the first coder but not the second, plus the number of codes made by the second coder but not the first. These agreement percentages were 76% for the Attribution Inference system, 72% for the Rewards and Punishments system, and 68% for the Universal coding system. Disagreements were resolved by each pair of coders, with involvement of the authors when necessary.

Data Analyses

Each category within each variable in each of the three systems (except for three variables in the Universal system which were treated as scales) was treated as a presence (1) versus absence (0) code, and these scores were aggregated across the vignettes within each of the three levels of problem ownership. Averaging these codes within each level yielded mean proportion scores indicating the likelihood that the teacher would use each category in responding to any particular vignette in that level of problem ownership. In addition, sum scores indicating multiple use of categories were computed and averaged for certain variables (rewards, for example). The proportion and sum scores were subjected to one-way analyses of variance to assess main effects due to levels of problem ownership.

Results

Data from the Attribution Inference codes are shown in Table 1. For each variable, we have included data for the category used most frequently and for the category indicating use of multiple codes. In addition, data for the category indicating mention of interaction between the most popularly used category and the contrasting category that was paired with it are given for the three variables that included this option. Data from the contrasting paired categories are not included in the table because they are redundant with the

Means, Standard Deviations and Probability Data from
Analyses of Variance in Teacher's Attributional Inferences by Problem Ownership

Proportional Use of Category

Category	<u>Teacher-owned Problems</u>		<u>Shared Problems</u>		<u>Student Owned Problems</u>		<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
<u>Teachers' Perceptions</u>								
<u>About the Students</u>	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
A1 Locus of causality:								
internal to student	.77	.19	.76	.20	.70	.20	3.83	.0229
A3 Locus of causality:								
internal-external								
interaction	.03	.06	.02	.06	.03	.07	.12	.8861
A4 Locus of causality:								
multiple possibilities	.07	.11	.13	.13	.13	.17	6.71	.0014
B1 Controllability								
student responsible	.79	.16	.36	.21	.16	.14	342.75	<.0001
B3 Controllability:								
both possibilities	.06	.08	.08	.09	.06	.08	1.57	.2106
C1 Intentionality: Student								
acts intentionally	.70	.16	.19	.12	.05	.09	742.70	<.0001
C3 Intentionality:								
both possibilities	.08	.11	.07	.09	.05	.09	2.58	.0776
D1 Stability: problem is								
stable over time	.85	.15	.87	.14	.93	.12	7.38	.0008
D3 Stability:								
both possibilities	.06	.09	.06	.09	.03	.07	4.02	.0191
E1 Globality: problem								
is generalized	.80	.16	.83	.14	.88	.14	7.33	.0008

(continued on next page)

Table 1, (cont'd.)

Table 1, (cont'd.)		18							
		<u>Teacher-owned Problems</u>		<u>Shared Problems</u>		<u>Student Owned Problems</u>		<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
E3	Globality:								
	both possibilities	.09	.10	.09	.09	.07	.10	2.66	.0718
<u>Teachers' Perceptions about</u>									
<u>Themselves</u>									
F2	Locus of causality:								
	problem is due to the								
	teacher	.92	.12	.93	.11	.90	.13	1.59	.2067
F3	Locus of causality:								
	T-S interaction	.01	.03	.01	.04	.03	.06	5.25	.0058
F4	Locus of causality:								
	multiple possibilities	.07	.11	.05	.08	.06	.08	1.01	.3640
G1	Controllability:								
	T can effect change	.61	.23	.78	.20	.66	.19	17.45	<.0001
G3	Controllability:								
	Meaningful change not								
	possible	.02	.05	.04	.07	.05	.10	6.48	.0018
G4	Controllability:								
	multiple possibilities	.32	.22	.16	.17	.23	.17	16.82	<.0001
H1	Stability: expects								
	stable improvements	.55	.23	.57	.20	.64	.22	4.33	.0140
H3	Stability: both possi-								
	bilities	.04	.08	.04	.08	.04	.07	.05	.9472
I1	Globality: expects								
	generalized improvements	.32	.22	.41	.23	.54	.26	21.22	<.0001
I3	Globality: both								
	possibilities	.01	.04	.02	.05	.01	.05	.96	.3836

other information.

In general, it is clear from the table that teachers' attributions about self and students differed according to level of problem ownership. As expected, means for teacher/student-shared problems (TS) typically fell between the means for primarily teacher-owned problems (T) and the means for primarily student-owned problems (S).

Locus of Causality

The data for categories F2 and A1 indicate that the teachers typically saw the problems as caused by factors external to themselves, typically factors internal to the student. Within these general trends, the teachers were slightly less likely to attribute student-owned problems to factors internal to the student ($.77_T$, $.76_{TS}$, $.70_S$), compared to teacher-owned or shared problems. It is clear from these data that teachers do not see themselves as the causes, in whole or even in part, of classroom behavior problems, at least the kinds of chronic behavior problems depicted in these vignettes.

Controllability

The means for variable B1 ($.79_T$, $.36_{TS}$, $.16_S$) indicate that the teachers' attributions concerning students' ability to control their behavior covary with problem ownership levels. Students exhibiting student-owned problems were seen as unable to control their behavior, and thus as victims rather than individuals responsible for their problems. Attributions concerning students with shared problems were more mixed, although teachers were somewhat more likely to see these students as unable to control their problem behavior than as able to control it. Finally, the teachers were very likely to see students presenting teacher-owned problems as able to control their behavior, and thus as blameworthy for the problems they created. For example, Carl, the underachiever in vignette #9, is seen as making paper airplanes instead of doing his work because he chooses to,

and not because he doesn't understand the directions or doesn't know how to do the assignment. In contrast, Jeff, the low achiever in vignette #12, has a student-owned problem. His failure to answer is attributed to low ability, and not to poor motivation or other causes that he would be expected to control (as Carl is). Betty, the immature student in vignette #11, presents a shared problem when she tattles to the teacher. Like the other shared problems, this produces less teacher consensus about controllability of the problem behavior. Some teachers believe that Betty knows better than to tattle such things, and tend to hold her responsible for failure to exercise control. Other teachers, however, see Betty as acting according to what she believes she should or must do, and they do not attribute controllability to her.

The means for variables G1, G3, and G4 indicate that teachers believe that meaningful change is possible even for these chronic behavior problems, and typically they believe that they can effect change through their own actions (vs. believing that change is possible but must come about through the actions of parents, physical maturation, or other factors that teachers do not control). Even so, teachers' confidence in their ability to effect change often assumed help from other adults (either the parents or school support services). The principal or counselor were often used for hostile aggressive and defiant students, and special aides for dealing with low achievers. Statements of inability to effect change (G3) were rare, but when they did occur they appeared most frequently with regard to hyperactivity.

Intentionality

As did their controllability attributions, teachers' attributions concerning intentionality in students' problem behavior covaried with levels of

problem ownership. The means for variable C1 indicate that intentionality is very likely to be attributed to students presenting teacher-owned problems, but unlikely to be attributed to students presenting shared problems and especially to students presenting student-owned problems ($.70_T$, $.19_{TS}$, $.05_S$). The main difference between the controllability and intentionality data is that teacher owned problems are usually seen as both controllable and intentional, but shared problems and student-owned problems are likely to be seen as unintentional even if they are seen as controllable. Students with the latter problems presumably present problem behavior because they do not know any better or are prone to forget instructions, and not because of any deliberate intention to misbehave.

For example, Jeff, the low achiever in vignette #12, is not seen as trying to get out of class recitation, to play to the class, to irritate the teacher, or in any other way to intentionally cause a problem. Instead, his problem stems from limited ability, something over which he has no control. Bill, the hyperactive student in vignette #3, creates a shared problem when he breaks the sculpture. Teachers typically see him as able to control his hyperactive behavior and thus responsible for the problem to a degree, but they usually temper this by recognizing that it is difficult for Bill to control his movements. Therefore, the incident described in the vignette is seen as an unfortunate accident, and not an intentional act of destruction. Both controllability and intentionality are typically attributed to Carl, the underachiever in vignette #9. Most teachers not only expect Carl to control his behavior (concentrate on his work), but also believe that he is misbehaving intentionally. He is aware that he is not supposed to be making paper airplanes at this time, but he does so nevertheless, perhaps as an act of defiance, to get attention, or to show off to his classmates.

Stability

The means for variable D1 indicate that the problem behavior of the students depicted in the vignettes was seen as stable over time (.85_T, .87_{TS}, .93_S), especially for student-owned problems. This has little meaning in the present study because stability was built into the vignettes. Data taken using vignettes without such stability cues would be more instructive.

The means for variable H1 (.55_T, .57_{TS}, .64_S) indicate that the teachers tended to see themselves as able to produce stable changes, especially for student-owned problems. Our impression is that intentionality notions are operating here. When teachers perceive problem behavior as unintentional, they tend to be more confident of being able to produce stable change. Intentionality is apparently associated with resistance to the teacher, and intentional problem behavior is seen as less likely to be changed by the teachers' efforts for any length of time beyond the immediate situation.

Globality

Like stability, globality of the problem behaviors (generalization across situations) was built into the vignettes. As a result, the means for variable E1 (.80_T, .83_{TS}, .88_S) are all high, but especially for student-owned problem situations. In general, the data for variables D1 and E1 indicate that the teachers were aware of the material built into the vignettes, indicating that the problem was not an isolated incident but part of an ongoing pattern of similar problem behavior exhibited by the student in question. It is not clear why the teachers were most likely to note this for student-owned problems and least likely for teacher-owned problems, and in any case these are relatively minor variations on the major themes described above.

The means for variable I1 (.32_T, .41_{TS}, .54_S) are lower and vary more than those for variables G1 and H1, indicating that teachers are relatively pessimistic about their abilities to bring about generalized change in student behavior, even though they are generally optimistic about their abilities to bring about stable change. Student-owned problems were an exception to this trend. Here, a slight majority of teachers expected improvement to generalize across situations as well as be stable over time.

Problem Solving Strategies

Selected data from the Rewards and Punishments coding system and the Universal coding system are presented in Table 2. These data indicate that levels of problem ownership covary not only with teachers' attributions about self and students, but also with the strategies they mention for coping with the problem. In teacher-owned problem situations, the teachers perceived the students as capable of self control but intentionally misbehaving. Given these attributions, the teachers were pessimistic about their ability to produce generalized improvements. These negative expectations were reflected in the restricted language shown in their responses to vignettes depicting teacher-owned problems. These responses were often confined to terse demands for behavior change, with little explanation of the rationales underlying these demands and little emphasis on instruction about appropriate behavior. Goals typically were limited to short-term control of symptomatic behavior, without emphasis on substituting desirable behaviors (rewards/shaping goals) or preventive/remedial attempts to address possible causes of the problem behavior (mental health goals). These restricted goals are reflected in a relative absence of

Table 2.

Selected Data Illustrating Relationships between Levels of
Problem Ownership and Teachers' Strategies for Responding to
the Problems Depicted in the Vignettes

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Strategy Variables	Teacher-Owned Problems		Shared Problems		Student-Owned Problems		F	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Rewards	.03	.08	.14	.16	.05	.11	26.98	.0001
Punishments	.65	.35	.27	.22	.04	.08	188.39	.0001
Supportive behavior	.50	.34	1.37	.47	1.98	.53	401.76	.0001
Specific behavioral praise	.02	.05	.08	.11	.08	.11	16.44	.0001
Global personal praise	.00	.01	.02	.06	.02	.05	7.72	.0006
Threatening/pressuring behavior	.35	.39	.20	.25	.06	.10	45.33	.0001
Specific behavioral criticism	.09	.12	.10	.12	.03	.07	16.74	.0001
Global personal criticism	.06	.10	.03	.08	.01	.03	13.57	.0001
Imperative (not instruc- tive) use of language to student ¹	1.51	.52	1.21	.41	1.08	.30	41.90	.0001
Mental Hygiene/Coping								
Goals	.19	.17	.39	.23	.65	.21	203.27	.0001
Rewards/Shaping Goals	.16	.16	.47	.21	.28	.19	98.01	.0001
Control/Threat or Punish Response	.85	.16	.38	.20	.20	.17	467.43	.0001

¹This variable was a three-point scale (1 = highly instructive; 2 = minimally instructive; 3 = purely imperative). All other variables are proportions reflecting use of categories scored present (1) vs. absent (0), or averaged sum scores reflecting use of any categories within the larger variables of reward, punishment, supportive behavior, or threatening/pressuring behavior.

rewards and supportive teacher behavior in these responses, and in frequent reliance on punishment or threatening/pressuring behavior.

In contrast, students presenting student-owned problems were seen as victims of circumstances they did not necessarily cause and could not control. Teachers expected difficulty in effecting change in these situations, but expected such change to have a meaningful effect on the students' lives, if accomplished. These attributions apparently translated into teacher commitments to help these students.

Teachers' responses in student-owned problem situations featured extensive talk designed to provide support, nurturance, and instruction, and not merely an attempt to control the students' behavior through rewards or punishments. The teachers frequently mentioned working on long-term goals with these students, attempting to improve their mental health by improving their self-evaluations, or teaching them coping techniques that would allow them to succeed in situations in which they were now failing.

Teachers' responses to shared problems fell in between these extremes, and yet yielded a third distinctive pattern of attributions and response strategies. Teachers' goals for students in these shared problem situations were more varied, but they were primarily long term, with emphasis on replacement of current problem behavior with more appropriate behavior. This is in contrast to both the short-term desist techniques employed in teacher-owned problem situations and the more generalized long-term mental-health goals characteristic of student-owned problem situations. Recall that in shared problems, students were seen as acting unintentionally but perhaps carelessly, and as needing to learn self control. Teachers expected to be able to improve their behavior, but perhaps

only within specific contexts, and perhaps with limited stability over time.

Students in these shared problem situations typically were exposed to behavior modification programs, with high teacher involvement in the form of close supervision or provision of cues or other help. There was some limited use of language for instruction or socialization, but typically these methods did not rely on language as the major treatment. Instead, there was an emphasis on environmental engineering, modeling, or shaping students' actions without extended explanation. Students in shared problem situations received the most rewards, as well as their share of punishments. In addition, they were praised more by the teachers, especially with praise tied to specific behavior (i.e., praise that was used as part of a behavior modification strategy rather than as part of an attempt to encourage or build close relationships with the students).

These strategies, based heavily on teacher controlled rewards, punishment, supports, and praise, are consistent with the teachers' attributions about students presenting shared problems, and with their belief that any changes in these students would probably be specific and unstable. The teachers expected that these students would be cooperative, but also believed that constant, ongoing environmental manipulations would be needed to maintain appropriate behavior. Thus, in the interest of maintaining a smooth running classroom, the teachers generally were willing to continually engineer events to improve the fit between the students and the classroom expectations.

Discussion

The data indicate that each of the levels of problem ownership was associated with a distinct pattern of teacher attributions about self and student and with a distinct set of strategies proposed for use in responding to the

problem. Teachers' attributions about the motivations and other causal factors underlying problem student behavior affect their expectations about what can be done to improve the situation, and these in turn affect the goals that teachers set and the strategies they employ in attempting to realize those goals.

The frequently significant and often striking effects of problem ownership support the usefulness of this concept for conceptualizing problem solving in the classroom. The data also support the application of attributional analyses of helping behavior to conceptualization of teachers' interactions with problem students. Research on helping behavior has established that withholding help is likely when victims are seen as responsible for their plights (i.e., when observers attribute victims' problems to internal causes and see them as able to control their problem behavior (Simon & Weiner, in press). Carroll and Payne (1976) reported similar patterns for parole decisions: Punishment is most harsh and parole least likely when the offender is seen as the source of the problem, as having acted intentionally, and as likely to persist in criminal behavior in the future. Conversely, offenders are less likely to be punished severely and more likely to receive parole when their crimes are judged to result from external, unintentional, and unstable causes. Our findings linking teachers' attributions about students' behavior with teachers' goals and strategies for dealing with these problems parallel these results.

We believe that attribution patterns form important links in the process that teachers use to construct strategies for coping with problem students, especially when initiating or changing strategies (that is, especially when engaging in active decision making rather than merely responding habitually). Figure 3 presents a model tracing this process. The model is influenced by Carroll and Payne's (1977) model of parole decisions. It begins with the teacher's perception

of a specific event interpreted against a background of previous beliefs and experiences with this type of behavior. This leads to an attributional analysis of the student and the teacher's own potential involvement. Real world cost factors are the final component in the construction of the teacher's influence strategy.

The cost decision analysis involves examining real world constraints and tradeoffs. The costs encompass (1) costs to the teacher, who must operate within the social demands of the teacher role and within personal expectations involving investments of time, energy, and emotional involvement; (2) costs to the problem student, whose present and future growth may be affected by any action or nonaction; (3) costs to the class in terms of lost teaching time, undesirable vicarious learning, or unintended ripple effects; and (4) potential costs in other areas such as relationships with the student's family or with the school administration.

For example, in teacher-owned problems, risk factors to the teacher's role status are high and are compounded by administrative expectations and the fact that most such problems occur in the presence of the class. Recall that teachers attributed controllability and intentionality to students presenting teacher-owned problems and indicated low expectations for promoting stable and global change. In these situations, we found that teachers' strategies were characterized by higher frequency of punishment, restricted language, and minimizing of long-term mental-health goals in favor of short-term control or desist attempts.

With student-owned problems, risk factors are less immediate and more focused on the student. Teachers attributed neither controllability nor intentionality to these students, and they indicated a hopeful prognosis for change. Thus this

level of problem ownership was associated with teacher encouragement and support, extended language, and long-term mental-health goals involving development of coping techniques and self approval.

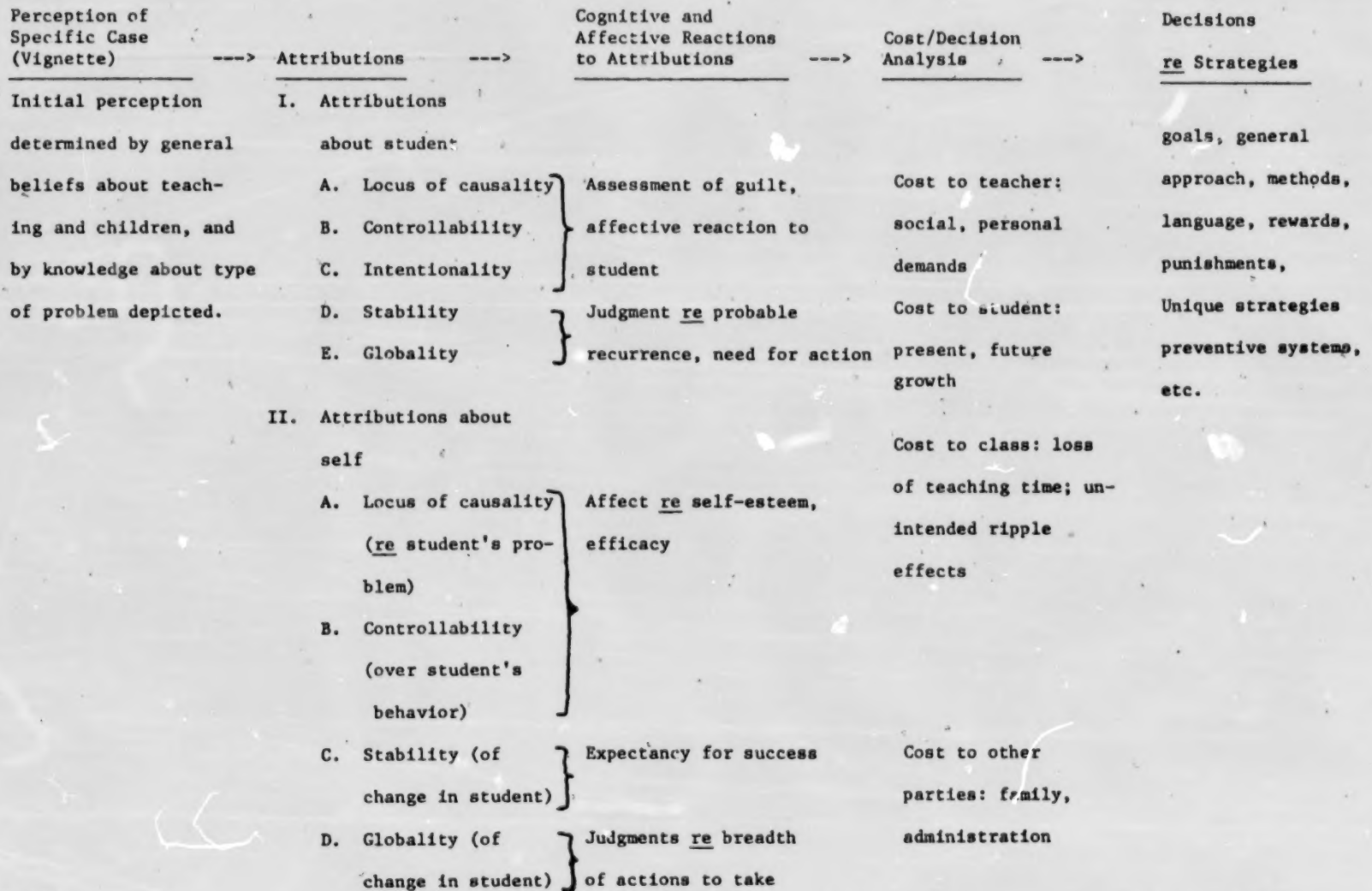
Finally, shared problem situations involve an immediate threat to the smooth running of the classroom (and therefore to teacher role demands), and a secondary threat to the student's learning progress or self evaluation. Teachers did not usually attribute intentionality to the student in these situations, even if they did attribute controllability, and they believed themselves capable of effecting stable specific change. Thus their strategies featured relatively little punishment and relatively more rewards and praise combined with contracts, behavior charting, and other techniques used to pursue behavior modification goals with specific objectives.

The model presented in Figure 3 accomodates information from the present study on teachers' attributions and strategies in dealing with problem students, and may be useful in generating other research on classroom life. It also illustrates how attributional analyses of onlookers' likely behavior toward victims who need help can apply to teachers and students (respectively) in classrooms.

These attributional inferences and decisions about response strategies appear to be part of the natural human process of making sense of the social environment (compounded, of course, by the situational effects and risk factors that apply when teachers are interacting with their students).

It should be noted that this natural process is not very effective or professionally appropriate for teachers or others whose professional obligations involve more commitment to helping their clients than can be expected of an onlooker encountering a victimized stranger on the street. It seems clear that

Figure 3. Process Model of Teacher Strategy Construction



"natural" attributions, especially as they apply to students presenting teacher-owned problems, can lead to self defeating expectations and behavior, resulting in deterioration of the teacher-student relationship and escalation of the behavior problem. Teachers need to be made more aware of the effects their attributions can have on their self-assessments and subsequent behavior, so that they can learn to construct strategies that extend beyond mere control and desist techniques. The "natural" attribution processes and related follow-up responses may be appropriate for making parole decisions, but they seem counterproductive for decision making in the classroom.

The findings related to problem ownership are also disturbing. Gordon (1974) suggests active listening, empathy, and other nondirective therapy techniques for dealing with student owned problems, and communication through "I" messages followed by negotiation of commitments for change in behavior for dealing with teacher-owned problems. These techniques were rarely mentioned by the teachers in this study. Teachers did typically respond sympathetically to students with student-owned problems, although they usually responded with a combination of environmental manipulation, advice, and suggestions, rather than active listening. In dealing with students presenting teacher-owned problems, the teachers were much more likely to respond punitively than to engage in the kind of problem solving negotiations that Gordon recommends. Thus, although the concept of problem ownership was useful in analyzing teachers' attributions and responses to problem students, it typically was not used consciously by the teachers themselves, and certainly was not used in the ways that Gordon recommends.

Given that all of the teachers in this study had at least three years of experience and had been recommended as either average or outstanding at dealing

with problem students by their principals, the data suggest widespread knowledge and skill deficiencies in these areas. Relatively few teachers had specific knowledge, let alone training, in behavior modification, mental-health consultation, or other strategies for dealing with problem students. Many teachers complained of this and stated a desire for such training, but many others stated that their job was to teach and not to act as therapists for students with personality or behavior problems. Thus, there seemed to be a minimal awareness of, and in some cases, an active lack of interest in, the wealth of knowledge about classroom management and problem solving that has developed in recent years (See Brophy & Putnam, 1979).

In closing, several methodological limitations and qualifications should be noted.

First, even though teachers could respond at length and in their own words, and even though the vignettes were revised several times to make them as familiar and realistic to the teachers as possible, the data come from self reports and not from classroom observation. We assume, but cannot prove, that teachers' attributions about self and student obtained from these vignette simulations reflect the attributions that would be obtained in real life (cf. Bar-Tal & Frieze, 1976; Fontaine, 1975; Frieze & LaVoie, Note 7). We will be analyzing relationships between teachers' responses to these vignettes and their behavior as observed during our classroom visits, however, to at least speak indirectly to this question.

It should also be noted that our interest in studying the 12 problem behavior types listed in Figure 1 led us to build stability and globality of problem behavior into the vignettes. Recall that the incident depicted in each vignette is presented as only the latest in a continuing series of similar incidents involving the same student. This portrayal of the vignette incidents as part of

a larger chronic problem begged the question of stability and globality perceptions, and may have affected teachers' locus of causality, controllability, and intentionality attributions as well. Similar research using different vignettes might yield different (more "professional") responses.

Finally, although these vignettes can simulate real classroom events as far as they go, they lack the rich context that surrounds classroom interactions involving a teacher and students who know one another and share a history of experiences together. It may be that certain teachers, especially those who have difficulty abstracting their thoughts about how to deal with hypothetical problem students but who achieve success dealing intuitively with real students in concrete situations, might look more impressive in their classrooms than they do in their responses to our vignettes. We doubt this, at least as a general phenomenon, because our impression is that teachers' vignette responses are generally better than their classroom responses to problem students, partly because of social desirability motivation and partly because it usually is easier to formulate an effective response in an interview situation than in the classroom. Nevertheless, it would be informative to study teachers' actual problem-solving behavior in classrooms, perhaps using stimulated recall techniques involving recording classroom events and then playing them back for teachers and allowing them to explain their thinking and motivation.

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